

Public Health Preparedness and Response for Bioterrorism

CDC/Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Initiative Update

JUNE 2001

State/Local Spotlight

The Washington Department of Health currently receives funding in 4 focus areas: epidemiology and surveillance; core capacity; epidemiology and surveillance; special projects; laboratory capacity for biologic agents, and Health Alert Network. Following are highlights of their recent accomplishments:

- Development of the WA Epidemiology and Surveillance Emergency Response Plan (modeled after CA's plan) using levels of suspicion that correspond to levels of notification and epidemiologic response. This plan will be annexed to the state and local health Emergency/Disaster Operations Plans;
- Development of protocols, case definitions, case report forms, and testing algorithms to assist local health jurisdictions with the evaluation of *Unexplained Critical Illness or Death* reports;
- Preliminary development of a state plan to receive, repackage, and distribute the National Pharmaceutical Stockpile as well as a local dispensing template to set up mass prophylaxis sites;
- Completion of the DOJ Public Health Emergency Preparedness Assessment in all of Washington's 39 counties. In conjunction with CDC, developing a methodology for analysis of the assessment;
- Development of a Bioterrorism Tabletop Exercise (which uses a foodborne pathogen) to engage the participants from the DOJ Public Health Emergency Preparedness Assessment;
- Development of palm technology versions of the BTEmergency Notification Protocol and emergency contact lists;
- Development of "Bioterrorism 101" training targeted at local emergency operations center staff;
- Development of sentinel surveillance for unexplained flu-like illness and other syndromes consistent with agents of bioterrorism, including development of site-specific software applications for extraction of data from clinical management and/or discharged diagnosis databases;
- Updates of procedures, reference materials, and training programs for public health laboratorians;
- Survey of all clinical microbiology laboratories in the state to assess the level of bioterrorism preparedness and the need for training;
- Development and validation of rapid identification methods for detection of potential bioterrorism agents;
- Development of the Washington Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS);
- Installation of a secured perimeter for DOH with firewalls and DMZ's;
- Consultation, training and installation of secure environments for Washington's local health jurisdictions;
- Establishment of a coordinated network of satellite downlink sites throughout the state;
- Implementation of Virtual Private Network technology for more secure transmission of data;
- Development of disease investigation training materials;
- Creation of fact sheets for healthcare providers, laboratory workers and the public for the agent of primary concern for bioterrorism and developed anthrax threat response guides for health departments, public safety agencies and businesses or agencies who have been targeted in the past.

For additional information about these or other activities of the Washington Department of Health, please contact Julie Wicklund, Bioterrorism Coordinator, at 206 361-2881 or Julie.wicklund@doh.wa.gov.

CDC Update

- The 2001 Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices Recommendations for Use of Smallpox (Vaccinia) Vaccine were republished in the June 22nd edition of the MMWR. In addition to guidelines addressing the current routine use of smallpox vaccine, they included recommendations regarding the emergency use of smallpox vaccine in response to a bioterrorism event involving smallpox virus.

- The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, via a grant from the CDC, is utilizing new techniques such as crystal structure technology and electron cryomicroscopy to study how alphaviruses such as Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis virus (level B virus) invade and change within the host cell in order to identify stages in the process that could be potential targets for antiviral agents. They are also evaluating new ways to prevent infection by viruses by developing specific "mini-proteins" that can bind to a virus and keep it from attaching to the cell and infecting it.
- The third in a series of four meetings to define core capacity elements for bioterrorism preparedness and response programs will be held July 30 - 31 in Washington, DC. This meeting will be focused on better defining and prioritizing the expansive list of capacities that was created at the meeting in Kansas City.

Upcoming Events

June 27 - 30, 2001	National Association of County and City Health Officials Annual Conference, <i>Confronting Disparities: Addressing the Social Determinants of Health</i> , Raleigh, NC, http://www.naccho.org .
June 28 - July 1, 2001	National Environmental Health Association, Chemical and Bioterrorism Preparedness Conference, Atlanta, GA, http://www.neha.org/tracks.html .
June 27, 2001	Satellite Broadcast: Consequence Management News, Equipment, and Training (CoMNET), National Terrorism Preparedness Institute (NTPI), 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. EST, http://terrorism.spjc.edu/comnet.html
July 24 - 26, 2001	DOE Chemical and Biological Nonproliferation Program (CBNP) Summer Meeting, Arlington, VA, http://www.nn.doe.gov/cbnp
August 6 - 10, 2001	International Conference on Disaster Management, Orlando, Florida http://www.disastermeeting.com
August 5 - 7, 2001	Conference on Public Health Informatics and Distance Learning: From Promise to Practice, Columbus, Ohio, http://www.asph.org/
Sept. 10 - 11, 2001	National Symposium on Hospital/WMD Consequence Management, Orlando, FL, sponsored by the National Institute for Government Innovation, call 888 - 670-8200 for more information.

Recent Publications

1. Wade J, Medical Risk Assessment of the Biological Threat, Battelle Memorial Institute/U.S. Army Medical Department, May 2001
2. JAMA Consensus Statement -- Tularemia as a Biological Weapon: Medical and Public Health Management, JAMA Vol. 285 No. 21, June 6, 2001
3. *Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning*, State and Local Guide (101), Chapter 6, Attachment G -- Terrorism, Federal Emergency Management Agency, <http://www.fema.gov/library/allhzpln.htm>.

Please submit items for future BT Updates to Kim McCoy at kmc@cdc.gov.